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European Patent Office
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(11) **EP 1 130 215 A2**

(12)

EUROPEAN PATENT APPLICATION

(43) Date of publication:

05.09.2001 Bulletin 2001/36

(51) Int Cl.7: **E21B 43/26, E21B 43/267**

(21) Application number: **01301494.9**

(22) Date of filing: **20.02.2001**

(84) Designated Contracting States:

**AT BE CH CY DE DK ES FI FR GB GR IE IT LI LU
MC NL PT SE TR**

Designated Extension States:

AL LT LV MK RO SI

(30) Priority: **02.03.2000 US 518159**

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(54) **Stimulating fluid production from unconsolidated formations**

(57) Fluid production from an unconsolidated formation penetrated by a wellbore is stimulated, while preventing the migration of formation sand with fluids produced from the formation, by injecting a liquid composition into a portion of the formation surrounding the wellbore, which composition converts into a gel-like substance and plugs the permeability of the injected portion of the formation, but allows the injected portion to remain

flexible and resist breakdown due to pressure cycling therein; creating at least one fracture in the formation extending from the wellbore through the plugged portion of the formation into an unplugged portion thereof; and depositing hardenable resin composition-coated proppant in the fracture and causing the resin composition to harden and consolidate the proppant into a hard permeable mass.

EP 1 130 215 A2

Description

[0001] The present invention relates generally to a method of stimulating wells in unconsolidated or poorly consolidated formations and, more particularly, to methods of stimulating hydrocarbon fluid production from such wells while preventing the migration of sand with the fluids produced therefrom.

[0002] Oil and gas wells are often completed in unconsolidated formations containing loose and incompetent or poorly consolidated sand which migrates with oil, gas and/or water produced by the wells. The presence of sand in the produced fluids is disadvantageous and undesirable in that the sand particles abrade pumping and other producing equipment and reduce the fluid production capabilities of the produced zones in the wells.

[0003] Incompetent subterranean formations include those which contain loose sand that is readily entrained by produced fluids and those wherein the sand particles making up the formations are bonded together with insufficient bond strength to withstand the forces produced by the production of fluids from the formations. A technique which is often used for minimising sand production from such formations has been to produce fluids from the formations at low flow rates whereby the near well stability of sand bridges and the like in the formations is preserved. However, the collapse of such sand bridges often occurs as a result of unintentional high production rates and/or pressure cycling. Pressure cycling occurs from frequent shut-ins and start ups of a well. The frequency of pressure cycling is very critical to the longevity of the near well formation, especially during the depletion stage of the well when the pore pressure of the formation has already been significantly reduced.

[0004] Heretofore, weakly consolidated formations have been treated by creating fractures in the formations and depositing proppant in the fractures to maintain them in open positions. In addition, the proppant has heretofore been consolidated within the fractures into hard permeable masses by hardenable resin compositions to reduce the migration of sand through the fractures with produced fluids. Very often, to insure that sand is not produced, costly gravel packs, sand screens and the like have been installed in the wells. Since gravel packs and sand screens filter out sand from the fluids being produced, the presence of the filtered sand adds to the flow resistance thereby producing additional pressure draw down which causes the fracture faces and other portions of the unconsolidated formations to break down and the consolidated proppant in fractures, gravel packs and the like to be bypassed.

[0005] We have now devised a method of stimulating fluid production from unconsolidated permeable formations penetrated by wellbores while reducing or preventing the migration of formation sand with fluids produced therefrom.

[0006] In one aspect, the invention provides a method of stimulating fluid production from an unconsolidated

or poorly consolidated permeable producing formation penetrated by a wellbore, while preventing the migration of formation sand with fluids produced therefrom, which method comprises the steps of:

- (a) injecting a liquid composition into a portion of said formation surrounding said wellbore, which composition subsequently converts into a gel-like substance and plugs the permeability of said injected portion of said formation, but allows said injected portion to remain flexible and to resist breakdown due to pressure cycling therein;
- (b) creating at least one fracture in said formation extending from said wellbore through said portion of said formation plugged in accordance with step (a) into an unplugged portion thereof; and
- (c) depositing hardenable organic resin composition coated proppant in said fracture and causing said resin composition to harden whereby said proppant is consolidated into a hard permeable mass to filter out and prevent the migration of formation sand with fluids produced through said fracture into said wellbore.

[0007] The liquid composition utilised in step (a) to plug the permeability of a portion of the formation can be any of several liquid compositions that cure or convert into a gel-like substance and plug the permeability of the formation. Examples of such liquid compositions include, but are not limited to, organic resin compositions, aqueous sodium silicate compositions and water soluble polymerisable monomer compositions.

[0008] The combination of the flexible plugged portion of the formation surrounding the wellbore through which at least one fracture extends and the consolidated permeable proppant in the fracture prevents the migration of sand with produced fluids from the formation.

[0009] The method of the invention reduces, or even eliminates, the necessity of installing expensive gravel packs, sand screens and the like in the wellbores.

[0010] Examples of liquid compositions that can be caused to subsequently convert into a gel-like substance which plugs the permeability of a formation, but allows the formation to remain flexible include, but are not limited to, curable organic resin compositions, gelable aqueous silicate compositions and polymerisable organic monomer compositions.

[0011] Curable organic resin compositions are well known to those skilled in the art as are their uses for consolidating portions of unconsolidated formations and fracture proppant materials into hard permeable masses. While the organic resin compositions utilised in accordance with the present invention can be similar to those heretofore used to consolidate sand and proppant into hard permeable masses, they function in accordance with the present invention to form flexible gel-like substances which plug the permeability of portions of unconsolidated formations. That is, the curable organic

resin compositions are used in accordance with this invention to form resilient gel-like substances in the pore spaces of a portion of an unconsolidated or poorly consolidated formation and thereby allow that portion of the formation to remain flexible and to resist breakdown. It is not necessary or desirable for the cured organic resin composition to solidify and harden to provide high consolidation strength to the treated portion of the formation. On the contrary, upon being cured, the organic resin compositions useful in accordance with this invention form semi-solid, immovable, gel-like materials which stabilize the treated portion of the formation to allow it to absorb the stresses created during pressure cycling and thereby prevent breakdown of the formation which produces loose sand.

[0012] The curable organic resin compositions useful in accordance with this invention are basically comprised of a curable organic resin, a diluent and a delayed resin curing agent. When certain resin curing agents such as polyamides are utilized in the liquid organic resin compositions, the compositions cure into the semi-solid, immovable, gel-like materials described above. When other curing agents are used which would normally cause the organic resin compositions to harden into hard and brittle materials, one or more additives which provide flexibility to the cured compositions can also be included therein. Such additives are referred to hereinafter as "flexibilizer additives."

[0013] Examples of curable organic resins which can be utilized in accordance with this invention include polyepoxide resins, polyester resins, urea-aldehyde resins, furan resins and urethane resins. Of these, polyepoxide resins are preferred. A variety of reactive diluents can be utilized with the above curable organic resins including, but not limited to, phenols, formaldehydes, furfuryl alcohol, furfural, esters, alcohols and ethers such as butyl glycidyl ether, cresyl glycidyl ether and phenyl glycidyl ether. The diluent functions to reduce the viscosity of the organic resin to in the range of from about 3 to about 3,000 centipoises at 80°F and is generally included in the organic resin composition in an amount in the range of from about 5% to about 75% by weight of organic resin utilized. The diluent also provides high flexibility to the final product.

[0014] When a flexibilizer additive is not included in the organic resin composition, the resin curing agent in the composition is preferably selected from the group consisting of amides and polyamides. The use of an amide curing agent causes the liquid organic resin composition to convert into a semi-solid, immovable, gel-like substance. When a flexibilizer additive is utilized, the curing agent can be one or more of amines, polyamines and other known resin curing agents.

[0015] The curing agent, with or without a flexibilizer additive, is generally included in the liquid organic resin composition in an amount in the range of from about 5% to about 75% by weight of organic resin therein, more preferably of from about 20% to about 60%.

[0016] When a flexibilizer additive is included in the liquid organic resin composition, it can be one or more of organic esters, oxygenated organic solvents and aromatic solvents, with organic esters such as dibutyl phthalate being the most preferred. When used, the flexibilizer additive is generally included in the liquid organic resin composition in an amount in the range of from about 5% to about 80% by weight of organic resin therein, more preferably from about 20% to about 45%.

[0017] The gellable aqueous silicate compositions which are useful in accordance with the present invention are basically comprised of an aqueous alkali metal silicate solution and a temperature activated catalyst for gelling the aqueous alkali metal silicate solution. The aqueous alkali metal silicate solution can include one or more of sodium, potassium, lithium, rubidium or cesium silicate. Sodium silicate is the most preferred silicate compound, and of the many forms in which sodium silicate exists, those having an Na_2O to SiO_2 weight ratio in the range of from about 1:2 to about 1:4 are preferred. A specifically preferred aqueous sodium silicate solution has an Na_2O to SiO_2 weight ratio of about 1:3.22.

[0018] The temperature activated catalysts which can be used include, but are not limited to, ammonium sulfate which catalyzes the alkali metal silicate solution and forms a gel at a temperature in the range of from about 60°F to about 240°F; sodium acid pyrophosphate which catalyzes the aqueous alkali metal silicate solution to form a gel at a temperature in the range of from about 60°F to about 240°F; citric acid which catalyzes the aqueous alkali metal silicate solution at a temperature in the range of from about 60°F to about 120°F; and ethylacetate which catalyzes the aqueous alkali metal silicate solution at a temperature in the range of from about 60°F to about 120°F.

[0019] The polymerizable organic monomer compositions which are useful in accordance with this invention are basically comprised of water, a water soluble polymerizable organic monomer, an oxygen scavenger and a polymerization initiator. The water used to form the polymerizable monomer compositions can be from any source provided it does not contain an excess of compounds that adversely affect other components in the compositions. For example, the water can be fresh water, seawater, brine or water containing various concentrations of one or more salts.

[0020] A variety of water soluble polymerizable organic monomers can be utilized in the polymerizable compositions. Examples of such monomers include, but are not limited to, acrylic acid, methacrylic acid, acrylamide, methacrylamide, 2-methacrylamido-2-methylpropane sulfonic acid, 2-acrylamido-2-methylpropane sulfonic acid, N-N-dimethylacrylamide, vinyl sulfonic acid, N,N-dimethylaminoethylmethacrylate, 2-triethylammoniumethylmethacrylate chloride, N,N-dimethylaminopropylmethacrylamide, methacrylamidopropyltriethylammonium chloride, N-vinyl pyrrolidone, vinylphosphonic acid and methacryloyloxyethyl trimethylammonium sul-

fate and mixtures thereof.

[0021] More preferred polymerizable monomers which are self crosslinking include hydroxyethylacrylate, hydroxymethylacrylate, hydroxyethylmethacrylate, N-hydroxymethylacrylamide, N-hydroxymethylmethacrylamide, polyethylene glycol acrylate, polyethylene glycol methacrylate, polypropylene glycol acrylate, polypropylene glycol methacrylate and mixtures thereof. Of these, hydroxyethylacrylate is most preferred. A particularly preferred polymerizable monomer is hydroxyethylcellulose-vinyl phosphoric acid.

[0022] The water soluble polymerizable monomer or monomers used are combined with the water in a general amount in the range of from about 5% to about 30% by weight of the water. More preferably, the monomer or monomers are present in the water in an amount in the range of from about 10% to about 20% by weight of the water.

[0023] The presence of oxygen in the polymeric composition inhibits the polymerization process. Therefore, an oxygen scavenger is included in the composition. A preferred such oxygen scavenger is stannous chloride which is generally dissolved in a 0.5% by weight aqueous hydrochloric acid solution in an amount of about 10% by weight of the solution. The resulting stannous chloride-hydrochloric acid solution is combined with the polymerizable composition in an amount in the range of from about 5% to about 10% by weight of the composition.

[0024] A variety of polymerization initiators can be utilized in accordance with this invention, i.e., the polymerization initiator can be any suitable water soluble compound or compounds which form free radicals in aqueous solutions. Such compounds include, but are not limited to, alkali metal persulfates, peroxides, oxidation-reduction systems employing reducing agents such as sulfites in combination with oxidizers and azo polymerization initiators.

[0025] Azo polymerization initiators are preferred for use herein in that they can have activation temperatures ranging from about 40°F to about 200°F. By determining the temperature of the formation into which the polymerizable monomer composition is to be placed, an azo compound can be selected for polymerization initiation which has an activation temperature equal to or slightly less than the temperature of the formation.

[0026] The preferred azo compounds for use herein are 2,2'-azobis(2-imidazole-2-hydroxyethyl) propane which has an activation temperature in the range of from about 70°F to about 100°F, 2,2'-azobis(2-aminopropane) which has an activation temperature in the range of from about 100°F to about 140°F, 4,4'-azobis(4-cyanovaleic acid) which has an activation temperature of from about 130°F to about 150°F and 2,2'-azobis(2-methyl-N-(2-hydroxyethyl) propionamide which has an activation temperature of from about 150°F to about 200°F. The quantity of the azo initiator employed is generally from about 0.1% to about 5% by weight of polym-

erizable monomer in the composition.

[0027] When the subterranean location in which the polymerizable monomer composition is placed is relatively cool as compared to the surface mixing temperature, e.g., below the mud line in offshore well operations, a secondary initiator such as triethanolamine can be included in the composition. The secondary initiator reacts with the primary initiator to provide free radicals at a lower temperature. Polysaccharide cross-linking delaying agents derived from guar, guar derivatives, and cellulose derivatives can also be included in the composition to delay cross-linking by cross-linking agents in the composition such as borates, titanium, zirconium, aluminum, antimony ions, or metal oxides such as magnesium oxide.

[0028] As stated above, after a portion of the permeable formation surrounding the wellbore is plugged in accordance with step (a), step (b) is carried out whereby at least one fracture is created in the formation extending through the plugged portion of the formation into an unplugged portion thereof. The fracture or fractures are created by pumping a viscous fracturing fluid containing suspended hardenable resin composition coated proppant into the formation at a rate and pressure whereby fractures are created therein. The continued pumping of the fracturing fluid extends the fractures in the formation and carries the resin composition coated proppant into the fracture or fractures formed. Upon the reduction of the flow of the fracturing fluid and the reduction in pressure exerted on the formation, the proppant is deposited in the fracture or fractures and the fracture or fractures are prevented from closing by the presence of the proppant therein.

[0029] Typical fracturing fluids which have been utilized heretofore include gelled water, oil base liquids, foams and emulsions. The most common fracturing fluid which has been utilized heretofore is comprised of an aqueous liquid such as fresh water or salt water combined with a gelling agent for increasing the viscosity of the fluid. The increased viscosity reduces fluid loss and allows the fracturing fluid to transport significant concentrations of proppant into the created fractures.

[0030] A variety of gelling agents have been utilized including hydratable polymers which contain one or more of functional groups such as hydroxyl, cis-hydroxyl, carboxyl, sulfate, sulfonate, amino or amide. Particularly useful such polymers are polysaccharides and derivatives thereof which contain one or more of the monosaccharide units galactose, mannose, glucoside, glucose, xylose, arabinose, fructose, glucuronic acid or pyranosyl sulfate. Natural hydratable polymers including the foregoing functional groups and units include guar gum and derivatives thereof, locust bean gum, tara, konjak, tamarind, starch, cellulose and derivatives thereof, karaya, xanthan, tragacanth and carrageenan. Hydratable synthetic polymers and copolymers which contain the above mentioned functional groups and which have been utilized heretofore include polyacrylate, polymeth-

acrylate, polyacrylamide, maleic anhydride, methylvinyl ether polymers, polyvinyl alcohol and polyvinylpyrrolidone.

[0031] Preferred hydratable polymers which yield high viscosities upon hydration, i.e., apparent viscosities in the range of from about 10 centipoises to about 90 centipoises at concentrations in the range of from about 10 pounds per 1,000 gallons to about 80 pounds per 1,000 gallons in water are guar gum and guar derivatives such as hydroxypropylguar and carboxymethylguar, cellulose derivatives such as hydroxyethyl cellulose, carboxymethyl cellulose and carboxymethylhydroxyethyl cellulose, locust bean gum, carrageenan gum and xanthan gum.

[0032] The viscosities of aqueous polymer solutions of the types described above can be increased by combining crosslinking agents with the polymer solutions. Examples of crosslinking agents which can be utilized are multivalent metal salts or compounds which are capable of releasing the metal ions in an aqueous solution. Examples of such multivalent metal ions are chromium, zirconium, antimony, titanium, iron (ferrous or ferric), zinc, aluminum and borates.

[0033] The above described gelled or gelled and cross-linked fracturing fluids can also include gel breakers of the enzyme type, the oxidizing type or the acid buffer type which are well known to those skilled in the art. The gel breakers cause the viscous fracturing fluids to revert to thin fluids that can be produced back to the surface after they have been used to create fractures, carry proppant and deposit the proppant in one or more fractures formed in subterranean formations.

[0034] As mentioned, the proppant deposited in one or more fractures formed in a subterranean formation functions to prevent the fractures from closing due to overburden pressures, i.e., to prop the fractures open, whereby produced fluids can flow through the fractures. Also, the proppant is of a size such that formation sand migrating with produced fluids is prevented from flowing through the flow channels formed by the fractures, i.e., the proppant filters out the migrating sand. Various kinds of particulate materials can be utilized as proppant in accordance with the present invention including sand, bauxite, ceramic materials, glass materials and "TEFLON™" materials. The particulate material used can have a particle size in the range of from about 2 to about 400 mesh, U.S. Sieve Series. The preferred particulate material is graded sand having a particle size in the range of from about 10 to about 70 mesh, U.S. Sieve Series. Preferred sand particle size distribution ranges are 1 or more of 10-20 mesh, 20-40 mesh, 40-60 mesh or 50-70 mesh, depending on the particle size and distribution of the formation sand to be screened out by the proppant.

[0035] The proppant size and distribution are carefully selected in accordance with the size and distribution of the formation sand and the proppant is coated with a hardenable resin composition. The hardenable resin

composition is preferably comprised of a hardenable organic resin and an aminosilane coupling agent such as N-β-(aminoethyl)-δ-aminopropyltrimethoxysilane. As is well known by those skilled in the art, the hardenable resin composition can be caused to harden after being introduced into the fracture or fractures formed and being heated by the formation. The resin composition can also be caused to harden by including a delayed internal hardening agent in the resin composition which causes the resin composition to harden after being deposited in the formation. The internal hardening agent can be one or more of the resin curing agents mentioned above. The most preferred such hardening agents are selected from the group consisting of amines and polyamines.

[0036] The hardenable resin composition coated proppant can be prepared in accordance with conventional batch mixing techniques followed by the suspension of the resin coated proppant in the fracturing fluid utilized. Alternatively, the fracturing fluid containing resin coated proppant can be prepared in a substantially continuous manner such as in accordance with the methods disclosed in U.S. patents nos. 4,829,100 and 5,128,390, to which reference should be made for further details.

[0037] After a fracture or fractures are created in the subterranean unconsolidated or poorly consolidated formation extending from the wellbore through the plugged portion of the formation into an unplugged portion thereof and the hardenable resin composition coated proppant has been deposited therein, the hardenable resin composition is caused to harden as described above whereby the proppant is consolidated into a hard permeable mass in the fracture or fractures. The hard permeable mass functions to filter out and prevent the migration of formation sand with fluids produced through the fracture or fractures into the wellbore.

[0038] A particularly preferred method of the present invention for stimulating fluid production from an unconsolidated or poorly consolidated permeable hydrocarbon producing formation penetrated by a wellbore while preventing the migration of formation sand with fluids produced therefrom is comprised of the steps of: (a) injecting a liquid composition into a portion of the formation surrounding the wellbore which subsequently converts into a gel-like substance and plugs the permeability of the injected portion of the formation, but allows the injected portion to remain flexible and to resist breakdown due to pressure cycling therein, the liquid composition being comprised of a curable polyepoxide resin, a diluent for the resin, a flexibilizer additive and a delayed resin curing agent; (b) creating at least one fracture in the formation extending from the wellbore through the plugged portion of the formation into an unplugged portion thereof; and (c) depositing hardenable resin composition coated proppant in the fracture and causing the resin composition to harden whereby the proppant is consolidated into a hard permeable mass which filters out and prevents the migration of formation

sand with fluids produced through the fracture into the well bore, the hardenable resin composition being comprised of a polyepoxide resin, a diluent for the resin, an aminosilane coupling agent and a hardening agent.

[0039] The polyepoxide resin in the liquid composition utilized in step (a) and in the hardenable resin composition utilized in step (c) is preferably comprised of the condensation product of bisphenol A and epichlorohydrin. The diluent in the liquid composition utilized in step (a) and in the hardenable resin composition utilized in step (c) is preferably comprised of butyl lactate, xylene or propanol, and the aminosilane coupling agent in the hardenable resin composition utilized in step (c) is preferably comprised of N- β -(aminoethyl)- δ -aminopropyltrimethoxysilane. The flexibilizer additive in the liquid composition utilized in step (a) is preferably comprised of dibutyl phthalate and the resin curing agent in the liquid composition utilized in step (a) is preferably comprised of polyamides, such as methylene dianiline. The hardening agent in the hardenable resin composition utilized in step (c) is preferably comprised of an amine or polyamine.

Claims

1. A method of stimulating fluid production from an unconsolidated or poorly consolidated permeable producing formation penetrated by a wellbore, while preventing the migration of formation sand with fluids produced therefrom, which method comprises the steps of:
 - (a) injecting a liquid composition into a portion of said formation surrounding said wellbore, which composition subsequently converts into a gel-like substance and plugs the permeability of said injected portion of said formation, but allows said injected portion to remain flexible and to resist breakdown due to pressure cycling therein;
 - (b) creating at least one fracture in said formation extending from said wellbore through said portion of said formation plugged in accordance with step (a) into an unplugged portion thereof; and
 - (c) depositing hardenable organic resin composition coated proppant in said fracture and causing said resin composition to harden whereby said proppant is consolidated into a hard permeable mass to filter out and prevent the migration of formation sand with fluids produced through said fracture into said wellbore.
2. A method according to claim 1, wherein said liquid composition injected in accordance with step (a) is a curable organic resin composition comprised of a curable organic resin, a diluent and a delayed resin curing agent.
3. A method according to claim 2, wherein said curable organic resin is a polyepoxide resin, preferably a condensation product of epichlorohydrin and bisphenol A; polyester resin; urea-aldehyde resin; furan resin or urethane resin.
4. A method according to claim 2 or 3, wherein said diluent is a phenol, formaldehyde, furfuryl alcohol, furfural, an ester, alcohol or ether.
5. A method according to claim 2, 3 or 4, wherein said delayed resin curing agent is an amine, polyamine, amide or polyamide.
6. A method according to claim 2, 3, 4 or 5, wherein said resin composition further comprises as flexibilizer additive an organic ester, oxygenated organic solvent or aromatic solvent.
7. A method according to any of claims 1 to 6, wherein said liquid composition injected in accordance with step (a) is a gellable aqueous silicate composition comprised of an aqueous silicate solution and a temperature-activated catalyst for gelling said aqueous silicate solution, said catalyst preferably being ammonium sulfate, sodium acid pyrophosphate, citric acid or ethyl acetate.
8. A method according to any of claims 1 to 7, wherein said liquid composition injected in accordance with step (a) is a polymerisable organic monomer composition comprised of water, a water-soluble polymerisable organic monomer, an oxygen scavenger (preferably stannous chloride) and a polymerisation initiator.
9. A method according to claim 8, wherein said water-soluble polymerisable organic monomer is hydroxyethylacrylate, hydroxymethylacrylate, hydroxyethylmethacrylate, N-hydroxymethylacrylamide, N-hydroxy-methylmethacrylamide, polyethylene acrylate, polyethylene methacrylate, polyethylene glycol acrylate, polyethylene glycol methacrylate, hydroxyethylcellulose-vinyl phosphoric acid, or any mixture of two or more thereof.
10. A method according to claim 8 or 9, wherein said polymerisation initiator is 2,2'-azobis(2-imidazole-2-hydroxyethyl) propane, 2,2'-azobis(2-aminopropane), 4,4'-azobis(4-cyanovaleric acid) or 2,2'-azobis(2-methyl-N-(2-hydroxyethyl) propionamide).
11. A method according to claim 8, 9 or 10, wherein said polymerisable organic monomer composition further comprises a cross-linking agent selected from borates, titanium ions, zirconium, ions, aluminium

- ions, antimony ions and metal oxides, and a polysaccharide cross-linking delaying agent derived from guar, guar derivatives or cellulose derivatives.
12. A method according to any of claims 1 to 11, wherein said fracture is created in accordance with step (b) by pumping a fracturing fluid into said formation at a sufficient rate and pressure to fracture said formation. 5 10
13. A method according to claim 12, wherein said hardenable resin composition coated proppant is suspended in said fracturing fluid and is deposited in said fracture in accordance with step (c) by said fracturing fluid. 15
14. A method according to any of claims 1 to 13, wherein said proppant is graded sand. 20
15. A method according to any of claims 1 to 14, wherein said hardenable organic resin composition coated on said proppant is comprised of a hardenable organic resin, a diluent and an aminosilane coupling agent. 25
16. A method according to claim 15, wherein said organic resin is a novolak resin, polyepoxide resin, polyester resin, phenolaldehyde resin, urea-aldehyde resin, furan resin or urethane resin. 30
17. A method according to claim 15 or 16, wherein said diluent is a phenol, formaldehyde, furfuryl alcohol, furfural, ester or alcohol. 35
18. A method according to claim 15, 16 or 17, wherein said aminosilane coupling agent in said hardenable organic resin composition is N- β -(aminoethyl)- γ -aminopropyltrimethoxysilane, N- β -(aminoethyl)-N- β -(aminoethyl)- γ -aminopropyltrimethoxysilane, N- β -(aminopropyl)- γ -aminopropyltriethoxysilane or N- β -(aminoethyl)- δ -aminopropyltrimethoxysilane. 40
19. A method according to any of claims 1 to 18, wherein said hardenable organic resin composition is caused to harden by being heated in said formation. 45
20. A method according to claim 15, 16, 17, 18 or 19, wherein said hardenable organic resin composition further comprises a delayed internal hardening agent which causes said resin composition to harden after being deposited in said formation, said delayed internal hardening agent being an amine or polyamine. 50 55
21. A method according to claim 4 or 17, wherein said diluent is comprised of butyl lactate.
22. A method according to claim 6, wherein said flexibiliser additive is comprised of dibutyl phthalate.
23. A method according to claim 5, wherein said resin curing agent is comprised of methylene dianiline.
24. A method according to claim 16, wherein said hardening agent in said hardenable resin composition utilised in step (c) is comprised of an amine.

(19)



Europäisches Patentamt

European Patent Office

Office européen des brevets



(11)

EP 1 130 215 A3

(12)

EUROPEAN PATENT APPLICATION

(88) Date of publication A3:
25.06.2003 Bulletin 2003/26

(51) Int Cl.7: **E21B 43/26, E21B 43/267,
E21B 33/138**

(43) Date of publication A2:
05.09.2001 Bulletin 2001/36

(21) Application number: **01301494.9**

(22) Date of filing: **20.02.2001**

(84) Designated Contracting States:
**AT BE CH CY DE DK ES FI FR GB GR IE IT LI LU
MC NL PT SE TR**
Designated Extension States:
AL LT LV MK RO SI

(30) Priority: **02.03.2000 US 518159**

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therein; creating at least one fracture in the formation extending from the wellbore through the plugged portion of the formation into an unplugged portion thereof; and depositing hardenable resin composition-coated proppant in the fracture and causing the resin composition to harden and consolidate the proppant into a hard permeable mass.

EP 1 130 215 A3



European Patent
Office

PARTIAL EUROPEAN SEARCH REPORT

Application Number

which under Rule 45 of the European Patent Convention EP 01 30 1494 shall be considered, for the purposes of subsequent proceedings, as the European search report

DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT			
Category	Citation of document with indication, where appropriate, of relevant passages	Relevant to claim	CLASSIFICATION OF THE APPLICATION (Int.Cl.7)
X	EP 0 826 865 A (HALLIBURTON ENERGY SERV INC) 4 March 1998 (1998-03-04) * column 2, line 28 - line 49 * * column 5, line 19 - column 6, line 55 * * column 7, line 38 - column 8, line 4 * ---	1-5, 12-20, 23,24	E21B43/26 E21B43/267 E21B33/138
X	US 6 016 870 A (NGUYEN PHILIP D ET AL) 25 January 2000 (2000-01-25)	1-5,21	
Y	* column 1, line 37 - line 57 * * column 2, line 12 - line 33 * * column 3, line 14 - column 4, line 30 * * column 5, line 59 - column 6, line 8; claims 1,4-9,21; examples 1,2 * ---	1,12-18, 21,23,24	
Y	US 5 609 207 A (WEAVER JIMMIE D ET AL) 11 March 1997 (1997-03-11) * column 1, line 20 - line 32 * * column 3, line 1 - line 52 * * column 4, line 66 - column 5, line 67 * * column 8, line 6 - line 47; example 1; table I * --- -/--	1,12-18, 21	
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			E21B
INCOMPLETE SEARCH			
<p>The Search Division considers that the present application, or one or more of its claims, does/do not comply with the EPC to such an extent that a meaningful search into the state of the art cannot be carried out, or can only be carried out partially, for these claims.</p> <p>Claims searched completely :</p> <p>Claims searched incompletely :</p> <p>Claims not searched :</p> <p>Reason for the limitation of the search:</p> <p>see sheet C</p>			
Place of search		Date of completion of the search	Examiner
THE HAGUE		6 May 2003	Boulon, A
CATEGORY OF CITED DOCUMENTS		<p>T : theory or principle underlying the invention E : earlier patent document, but published on, or after, the filing date D : document cited in the application I : document cited for other reasons --- & : member of the same patent family, corresponding document</p>	
<p>X : particularly relevant if taken alone Y : particularly relevant if combined with another document of the same category A : technological background O : non-written disclosure P : intermediate document</p>			

EPO FORM 1503 (11.82) (P0, C07)



European Patent
Office

INCOMPLETE SEARCH
SHEET C

Application Number
EP 01 30 1494

Claim(s) searched incompletely:
1,12-24

Claim(s) not searched:
7-11

Reason for the limitation of the search:

Present claimla. relate to an extremely large number of possible compounds. Support within the meaning of Article 84 EPC and/or disclosure within the meaning of Article 83 EPC is to be found, however, for only a very small proportion of the compounds claimed. In the present case, the claims so lack support, and the application so lacks disclosure, that a meaningful search over the whole of the claimed scope is impossible. Consequently, the search has been carried out for those parts of the claims which appear to be supported and disclosed, namely those parts relating to the preferred compositions mentioned in the description at pages 16-18 eg. the ones based on a curable organic resin.

*



European Patent
Office

PARTIAL EUROPEAN SEARCH REPORT

Application Number
EP 01 30 1494

DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT			CLASSIFICATION OF THE APPLICATION (Int.Cl.7)
Category	Citation of document with indication, where appropriate, of relevant passages	Relevant to claim	
Y	US 3 854 533 A (GURLEY D ET AL) 17 December 1974 (1974-12-17) * column 2, line 29 - column 4, line 53 * * column 5, line 3 - line 28 * ---	1,12-18, 23,24	
Y	FR 863 652 A (BATAAFSCHE PETROLEUM) 7 April 1941 (1941-04-07) * page 1, line 53 - page 2, line 57 * ---	1,7	
Y	US 2 208 766 A (LAWTON HOWARD C) 23 July 1940 (1940-07-23) * page 1, left-hand column, line 40 - right-hand column, line 49 * ---	1,7	
Y,P	US 6 187 839 B1 (BROWN DAVID ET AL) 13 February 2001 (2001-02-13) * column 1, line 21 - line 67 * * column 2, line 24 - line 47 * * column 3, line 48 - column 4, line 23 * * column 5, line 31 - line 67 * -----	1,8-11	TECHNICAL FIELDS SEARCHED (Int.Cl.7)
Y	US 5 335 726 A (RODRIGUES KLEIN A) 9 August 1994 (1994-08-09) * column 2, line 46 - line 57 * * column 4, line 50 - column 6, line 68 * * column 9, line 53 - column 10, line 2; claims 1,8,9 * -----	1,8-11	



European Patent
Office

Application Number
EP 01 30 1494

CLAIMS INCURRING FEES

The present European patent application comprised at the time of filing more than ten claims.

- ☐ Only part of the claims have been paid within the prescribed time limit. The present European search report has been drawn up for the first ten claims and for those claims for which claims fees have been paid, namely claim(s):
- ☐ No claims fees have been paid within the prescribed time limit. The present European search report has been drawn up for the first ten claims.

LACK OF UNITY OF INVENTION

The Search Division considers that the present European patent application does not comply with the requirements of unity of invention and relates to several inventions or groups of inventions, namely:

see sheet B

- ☒ All further search fees have been paid within the fixed time limit. The present European search report has been drawn up for all claims.
- ☐ As all searchable claims could be searched without effort justifying an additional fee, the Search Division did not invite payment of any additional fee.
- ☐ Only part of the further search fees have been paid within the fixed time limit. The present European search report has been drawn up for those parts of the European patent application which relate to the inventions in respect of which search fees have been paid, namely claims:
- ☐ None of the further search fees have been paid within the fixed time limit. The present European search report has been drawn up for those parts of the European patent application which relate to the invention first mentioned in the claims, namely claims:



European Patent
Office

LACK OF UNITY OF INVENTION
SHEET B

Application Number

EP 01 30 1494

The Search Division considers that the present European patent application does not comply with the requirements of unity of invention and relates to several inventions or groups of inventions, namely:

1. Claims: 1-6,12-24

A method of stimulating fluid production from an unconsolidated or poorly consolidated formation.....which comprises the steps of :

- a) injecting a curable organic resin composition...
- b) creating at least one fracture.....
- c) depositing hardenable organic resin composition coated proppant

2. Claims: 1,7,12-24

A method of stimulating fluid production from an unconsolidated or poorly consolidated formationwhich comprises the steps of :

- a) injecting a gellable aqueous silicate composition
- b) creating at least one fracture.....
- c) depositing hardenable organic resin composition coated proppant

3. Claims: 1,8-11,12-24

A method for stimulating fluid production from an unconsolidated or poorly consolidated formationwhich comprises the steps of :

- a) injecting a polymerisable organic monomer composition....
- b) creating at least one fracture.....
- c) depositing hardenable organic resin composition coated proppant

**ANNEX TO THE EUROPEAN SEARCH REPORT
ON EUROPEAN PATENT APPLICATION NO.**

EP 01 30 1494

This annex lists the patent family members relating to the patent documents cited in the above-mentioned European search report. The members are as contained in the European Patent Office EDP file on
The European Patent Office is in no way liable for these particulars which are merely given for the purpose of information.

06-05-2003

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		NO 942395 A	24-04-1995

EPO FORM P0459

For more details about this annex : see Official Journal of the European Patent Office, No. 12/52